

Executive Summary

Key Task Force Findings and Recommendations

The Transportation Vision 21 Task Force has identified ten major recommendations to improve Arizona's statewide transportation system based on its studies and findings. The

following section highlights the Task Force's key recommendations and some of the findings that support the recommendations.

Reform and Improve Transportation Planning and Programming Processes

Task Force Findings:

Performance based planning and programming used effectively in other states to maximize the effectiveness of limited transportation resources.

Major Recommendation One:

REQUIRE PERFORMANCE-BASED PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

All transportation planning and programming organizations within Arizona should be required to utilize performance based planning and programming techniques. The State Transportation Board should adopt approved performance based planning and programming processes for use by all such organizations. All organizations charged with developing transportation priorities within the State should be mandated, by law, to use the adopted processes.

Task Force Findings:

Arizona needs an integrated long-range (at least 20 years) transportation plan. A 20-year plan will identify the State's critical transportation needs. The Plan should include all modes of transportation including roadway, rail, transit, air, bicycle, pedestrian, and freight as well as alternatives including travel reduction programs and telecommunications.

Major Recommendation Two:

DEVELOP AND ADOPT A LONG-RANGE, STATEWIDE, MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

State law should require the State Transportation Board to adopt a Long-Range (minimum of twenty years), Statewide, Multimodal Transportation Plan. ADOT should develop the Plan, under the State Transportation Board's direction, utilizing performance based planning techniques. The Plan should incorporate all modes of transportation, the transportation needs of all regions and all jurisdictions within the state and should consider any information developed as a result of federally mandated planning processes.

Task Force Findings:

There is a distinct gap in the coordination of land use plans among state, local and regional transportation plans.

Major Recommendation Three:

COORDINATE LAND USE PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

State, regional and local planning entities must increase coordination of their long-range, land use plans and their long-range transportation plans.

Local land use plans must consider state and regional transportation plans, especially with respect to future transportation system corridors.

In turn, state and regional transportation plans should recognize local land use plans. Where appropriate, these plans should also incorporate air quality measures.

overlaying transportation system plans and land use plans by all affected jurisdictions will increase the usefulness and benefits of those plans and will help avoid unintended conflicts in the future.

The coordination and consideration of the

Enhance Transportation System Accountability and Responsiveness

Task Force Findings:

There is a lack of verifiable and standardized data to measure how effectively transportation improvements and services are meeting our State's existing and future transportation demands or needs.

New computer technologies (e.g. Highway Performance Measurement System) have made it feasible for the state to develop an affordable and comprehensive transportation database to inventory and to monitor state, county, local and tribal roadway systems.

the basis of local impacts, rather than regional consequences.

Beginning in the late 1990's cities moved to fund transportation projects, especially transit services, through local tax referenda. While successful passage of these local tax elections may help meet municipal needs, they do not address regional transportation facilities or services.

Major Recommendation Four:

ESTABLISH COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

ADOT should be required to establish a comprehensive financial management system encompassing all aspects of the state transportation system. The comprehensive system should include separate certifications of future, estimated revenues and future, estimated system costs as reflected in the statewide 20-year transportation plan. All transportation revenues (federal, state and local/regional) received by all state agencies should be included in the certification.

Task Force Findings:

Mayors elected from individual cities control the Metropolitan Planning Organizations within the State. This structure establishes an inherent conflict between the regional responsibilities of the MPO and the local responsibilities of each mayor. Locally elected mayors are obligated to represent the best interests of their constituents and most act accordingly. Therefore, regional plans and priorities are frequently evaluated on

Major Recommendation Five:

ESTABLISH URBAN REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE DISTRICTS

Regional Transportation and Land Use Districts should be established in the large urban areas to address regional, multimodal transportation requirements, land use compatibility and other regional impacts of development. The Districts should be responsible for developing, implementing and operating multimodal transportation systems to meet regional transportation needs. The Districts should enable the large urban areas to: 1) improve and maintain regionally significant transportation systems and services; 2) ensure broad, regional land use compatibility; and 3) address the regional impacts of development through the establishment of districts that are not bound to or limited by existing county or incorporated city boundaries.

Task Force Findings:

Some provisions in state law dealing with the State Transportation Board are outdated and limit the ability of growing urban and rural communities to submit viable candidates for the Governor's consideration.

Following the passage of the ½ percent freeway sales tax in Maricopa County in 1985, ADOT and the State Transportation Board shifted more of ADOT's discretionary monies to make major improvements on several key rural highways.

Major Recommendation Six:

STRENGTHEN THE ARIZONA TRANSPORTATION BOARD

The Arizona State Transportation Board should be increased to nine members. The members would no longer represent specific geographic "districts", but would represent the State as a whole. The following restrictions would be imposed on appointments to the State Transportation Board:

- A. Three members should be appointed from each county with a population greater than one-third of the state's population, according to the most recent decennial

census;

- B. One member should be appointed from each county with a population greater than 500,000, according to the most recent decennial census, provided such county is not included in paragraph A;
- C. Five members should be appointed from the remainder of the state not included in paragraph A or B, but no more than one member may be appointed from any one county; and
- D. State Transportation Board members may not serve in elected positions.

In appointing members of the State Transportation Board, the Governor shall consider individuals with a wide variety of relevant knowledge and experience, including knowledge of roadways, mass transit services, aviation systems, freight movement, bicycle and pedestrian needs, and local, regional, statewide, and tribal transportation issues.

Establish 20-Year Statewide Transportation System "Budget"

Task Force Findings:

The demands on Arizona's transportation system have grown and will continue to grow. Arizona's current transportation system cannot handle the projected population growth and increasing travel demand.

The average costs associated with various modes of transportation are significant in terms of capital and annual operation or maintenance costs.

A thorough review of current transportation programs and long-range transportation plans indicates that current revenue sources will be insufficient to meet projected population growth and transportation demands over the next 20 years, despite additional federal and local revenue sources becoming available in recent years.

Typically, it takes 15 to 20 years or more to allocate sufficient resources to complete major widening projects (typically to four-lanes) on some of the state's major rural highways.

Monies in the Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) are constitutionally restricted principally to roadway and bridge purposes. HURF revenues have become less effective in fully meeting Arizona's growing transportation needs. Factors, such as inflation, improved fuel efficiency, and the increasing use of non-taxed fuel sources, have and will continue to erode the effective yield of Highway User revenues.

Major Recommendation Seven:

INCREASE DEDICATED TRANSPORTATION REVENUES

Dedicated transportation revenues should be increased gradually over the next twenty years by approximately \$20 billion dollars, in constant year 2000 dollars, to meet the expected needs of Arizona's multimodal, statewide transportation system. A series of gradual tax rate increases should be implemented throughout the 20-year period. In recognition of the uncertain schedule for implementation of these recommendations,

each recommended adjustment has been scheduled within the 20-year period.

The new transportation revenue system should emphasize sufficient flexibility to permit the allocation of revenues to the transportation system improvements identified through the performance based planning and programming processes described above.

The funding sources for transportation need to expand beyond the dedicated revenues of the Highway User Revenue Fund, the largest component of which is fuel taxes. Not only are these monies constitutionally restricted to street, highway and bridge purposes, the effective revenue generating power of the fuel tax continues to be eroded by conversions to alternative fuels and the increasing fuel efficiency of the general vehicle fleet.

In recognition of the need for greater flexibility in funding all modes of transportation the recommended revenues rely heavily on non-restricted revenue sources.

Increase Fuel Taxes

State fuel taxes should be increased gradually over the next twenty years. The initial increase of \$.05 per gallon should be enacted in Year 1 or as soon as possible. An additional \$.04 increase should be imposed in Year 4 and

smaller \$.02 increases should occur in Year 9 and Year 14.

Establish A Dedicated Statewide Sales Tax

A dedicated, statewide transportation sales tax surcharge should be phased-in, beginning with a 0.25% surcharge in Year 1, or as soon possible and an additional 0.5% surcharge is proposed in Year 5. The timing of implementation of the additional 0.5% surcharge should, if possible, coincide with the expiration of the Maricopa County Regional Area Road Fund (RARF) tax during FY 2006.

Establish Dedicated Statewide Development Fees For System Expansion

A dedicated, statewide development fee equal to 1 per cent of value should be enacted and imposed on all new commercial and residential development in the State. The revenues generated from the fee should be used exclusively for improvements to the state transportation system required to meet the increased transportation demand for moving goods and people associated with the development. This fee is distinct from the locally imposed fee recommended above to deal with specific major developments.

Identify and Establish Transportation System Funding Priorities

Task Force Findings:

State and national studies indicate that pavement preservation programs can extend the life of streets and highways and can avoid costly roadway reconstruction.

Ongoing maintenance and repair of the 155-mile Maricopa Regional Freeway System will compete with other existing highway segments for scarce maintenance dollars.

Major Recommendation Eight:

PRIORITIZE SYSTEM PRESERVATION

The first priority for transportation revenues should be maintenance and preservation of

existing, used and useful system assets. Monies should be prioritized for preservation at the long-term optimal level. All transportation agencies should be mandated, by law, to establish system preservation analysis models similar to the pavement preservation model used by ADOT for the state highway system.

Task Force Findings:

Existing and future congestion on state and local roadways will hinder Arizona's economy and threaten the quality of life for our citizens and visitors.

National studies indicate that 50% to 60% of all traffic congestion is attributed to incidents (e.g., minor accidents, stalled or abandoned vehicles on the freeway shoulder, large debris in roadway). These studies also indicate that formal incident management programs and freeway management systems are two effective strategies for reducing congestion.

Major Recommendation Nine:

PRIORITIZE CONGESTION RELIEF AND COMMUTER SERVICES

The next highest priority for transportation revenues should be congestion relief, improving commuter services and reducing delays. A specific portion of state collected transportation revenues (in addition to local monies) should be dedicated to addressing existing and future commuter needs and congestion relief in all areas of the State.

Task Force Findings:

A variety of cost-effective, transportation system improvements could be implemented to enhance mobility and relieve congestion in growing urban areas, especially in the two large metropolitan areas.

Major Recommendation Ten:

IMPLEMENT IMMEDIATE AND OBVIOUS SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

There are a substantial number of immediate and obvious improvements to the State's transportation system that should be immediately implemented. Most of these improvements can be most effectively implemented in the State's largest urban areas, although some have statewide applicability.